CITY OF GOSNELLS

# INFORMATION SHEET
# PETITIONS

**What is a Petition?**

A petition is basically a request for action. Any elector or group of electors may petition the Council to take action. For example, petitions may ask the Council to change existing Policy, Local Law, decision of Council or take action for a certain purpose or for the benefit of particular persons.

The subject of a petition must be a matter on which the Council has the power to act.

Care must be taken in the wording of petitions as Council imposes certain requirements on their form and content.

An elector is a person who owns or occupies rateable properties within the City of Gosnells and is eligible to vote in Local and State Elections.

**Requirements**

The City of Gosnells Standing Orders sets out a number of requirements governing the format and presentation of petitions. These are designed to ensure the authenticity of petitions and protect the intentions of petitioners and the Council. The Standing Orders do not impose any particular style of expression but certain other requirements must be met. It is important that those involved in drawing up petitions familiarise themselves with the requirements before taking steps to collect signatures. This will avoid the possibility of the petition being ruled out of order and not being presented to Council. The main requirements are outlined below.

To be presented to Council, a petition must:

- Be addressed to the Mayor
- Be made by electors of the district
- State the request on each page of the petition
- Contain the names, addresses and signatures of the electors making the request
- Contain a summary of the reasons for the request
- State the name of the person upon whom (initiator), and an address at which, notice to the petitioners can be given
- Be respectful and temperate in its language and not contain language disrespectful to Council.

All the signatures on a petition must meet the following requirements:

- Every signature must be written on a page bearing the terms of the petition, or the action requested by the petition
- Signatures must not be copied, pasted or transferred on to the petition nor should they be placed on a blank page on the reverse of a sheet containing the terms of the petition
- Each signature must be made by the person signing in his or her own handwriting.



Document Set ID: 6452410
Version: 1, Version Date: 10/07/2020

**Collecting Signatures**

Although technically a petition only needs to have one elector's signature to be accepted, it will obviously appear more representative of public feeling if it is signed by as many people as possible.

**Getting the Petition presented:**

A petition can only be presented to Council at an Ordinary Council Meeting by a Councillor or the Chief Executive Officer. The initiator is to ensure the petition is forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer or Councillor prior to the commencement of the Ordinary Council Meeting at which they would like the petition presented. Although the Councillor is not bound to present a petition, it is traditionally accepted that he or she will present it, irrespective of personal views. Presentation of a petition by a Councillor does not mean that the Member necessarily agrees with its content.

Details of dates, times and location of Ordinary Council Meetings can be obtained by telephoning 9397 3000 or the City's Website.

**What happens in a Council Meeting?**

At Item 8 in the Order of Business on the Agenda the Chief Executive Officer or Councillor presenting the petition will read out the name and address of the initiator of the petition, a summary of the reasons for the petition along with the number of signatures contained within the petition.

At the time of presentation by the Councillor, no discussion on the subject matter of a petition takes place, although a Councillor may move one of the following motions:

- That the petition be received
- That the petition be rejected
- That the petition be received and a report prepared for Council
- That the petition be received and referred to the CEO for action.

**What happens After a Petition has been presented?**

Every petition presented is referred to the Directorate responsible for the matter, which is the subject of the petition, upon receipt of which a staff member will advise the initiator what action is proposed in dealing with the petition.

Even though petitions may seem to produce no immediate or obvious result, they inform Council, in a public way, of the views of sections of the community and they serve as one means of placing community concerns before Council.



Document Set ID: 6452410
Version: 1, Version Date: 10/07/2020